

WELCOME SPEECH BY THE ENVOY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, I am honoured and pleased to welcome you here.

At the opening of this international conference, I consider it is important to say why the establishment of a new institution, that of the European Public Prosecutor, is significant for the future of the European Union as a community to which the Republic of Croatia has belonged as an equal member for a full five years. It should also be emphasised that more robust protection of the financial interests of the European Union in terms of damage to the European budget resulting from criminal offences cannot be achieved solely through the existing European bodies or juridical mechanisms of the Member States due to a number of formal restrictions. One should also be aware that the financial interests of the European Union are also the financial interests of the Member States participating in the revenue of the European budget. Juridical mechanisms in the prosecution of criminal offences detrimental to the European budget should be as effective as national ones, and this is precisely why it was essential to proceed with the establishment of the Office of the European Public Prosecutor. We are exceptionally pleased that the Republic of Croatia has recognised the importance of this new institution and that it is taking all the steps necessary to complete its implementation within the planned deadlines, together with twenty-one other Member States of the European Union. However, at this moment, for some reason, five Member States have not joined the concerted efforts to establish the European Public Prosecutor's Office. In this matter, and in light of the Croatian presidency of the European Union, but also given the substantial challenges that the European Union faces, the President of the Republic of Croatia expects active participation from the Government of the Republic of Croatia within the competences and strategic guidelines of the European Council. Under current circumstances, the creation of new institutions and the strengthening of existing ones that better integrate the interests of the Member States are highly important for our common European future.

Further, the establishment of such a new European institution entails appropriate regulatory adjustments to the Croatian legal system. The Government of the Republic of Croatia, but also other state bodies in line with their constitutional duties, should carry out in a timely manner all the necessary activities to firmly

protect the interests of Croatian taxpayers, but also the interests of taxpayers from other Member States of the European Union.

Certain proposals have been made to extend the competence of the European Public Prosecutor to combat terrorism more effectively. Such proposals should be taken very seriously because the security of our citizens is beyond price.

Finally, I wish all members of the academic community and other participants in this important international conference great success in the work undertaken. I hope that the results of your efforts will find a place in the forthcoming activities of European institutions related to the European Public Prosecutor.

Thank you for your attention.

*Mato Palić, PhD, Assistant Professor
Envoy of the President of the Republic of Croatia*